

# **COLLECTION OVERVIEW**

## **EUROPEAN STUDIES**

### **I. SCOPE**

This overview focuses on European items in the collections of the Library of Congress. The term ~European~ covers the whole continent of Europe and the entire Russian Federation. European items include books, periodicals, prints, newspapers, and other library materials originating in Europe. The vast American literature dealing with, or influenced by, Europe, generally has not been considered in this overview.

### **II. SIZE**

Library of Congress holdings of books and other materials from many European countries, especially from Eastern Europe, are larger than anywhere in the world except in the countries themselves. The European Reading Room's home page provides extensive overviews of many individual country collections.

The German collections comprise approximately 3,300,000 volumes. French items in the general collections are estimated at over 1,250,000 volumes. The Russian collections amount to about 800,000 volumes in Russian, to which may be added about an equal number of volumes in other languages of the former Soviet Union and in Western languages about Russia. Italian items number about 500,000 volumes, and of approximately equal size are the Spanish and Portuguese collections, which are discussed more extensively under the Collection Overview for Luso-Hispanic Studies.

Separate from the Russian Empire/Soviet collections, approximately one million volumes pertain to Eastern Europe; these materials include volumes from or about the individual countries of non-Soviet Eastern Europe or about Eastern Europe as a region. Poland, for instance, is represented by about 250,000 volumes.

Astonishingly rich and usually well balanced are the collections of most of the smaller European countries. As examples: the Danish collections of monographs, bound periodicals, and annuals are estimated at about 125,000 volumes; the Swedish collections -- 170,000 volumes; the Czech and Slovak collections -- 130,000 volumes; and the Hungarian collections -- 200,000 volumes. For each of these countries, the Library has large numbers of current and retrospective newspapers and periodicals.

### **III. GENERAL RESEARCH STRENGTHS**

The Library's rich European collections provide some of the stronger resources in the United States for the study of European affairs in the areas of social studies, humanities, and law. For most European countries the collections offer in-depth coverage in a great

variety of subjects throughout all periods. For decades the Library collected books and periodicals that were not available to researchers in Central and Eastern Europe under communist regimes (Samizdat publications, émigré literatures, works of Western authors on Central and Eastern Europe). For this reason the European collections are, for certain types of materials, even more inclusive than the domestic collections in some of the European countries themselves.

European items are especially strongly represented in the Library's Rare Book and Special Collections. It is estimated that about 50 percent of the Library's rare books are of European origin. The Library of Congress, housing such treasures as the Giant Bible of Mainz and Magna Carta cum Statutis Angliae, has one of the world's most valuable collections of preserved written and printed testimonies of European culture. In the Geography and Map Division, 25 to 30 percent of all maps are European. The Library's collections of European sheet music and recorded sound are also impressive.

#### **IV. AREAS OF DISTINCTION**

Our collections begin with the acquisition of Thomas Jefferson's Library in 1815 and have benefitted from materials of great value are included in such famous collections as the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Katherine Golden Bitting Collection (gastronomy), Hauslab-Liechtenstein collection (maps), John Hersholt Collection, Rochambeau Collection, and Johaim Georg Kohl Collection (maps of the New and Old Worlds). Selected European collections include"

**Archives of the Soviet Communist Party and Soviet State** - a collection of finding aids and records documenting the activities of the Soviet State and Communist Party from 1917 until 1991 on 4992 microfilm reels.

**Bible Collection** - more than 1,400 early editions and rare issues of the Bible.

**Cold War Military Archives** - Microfilm collections from Hungary, Poland, and Romania, described on the European Divisions web site.

**Coutume Collection** - 800 volumes of books and manuscripts pertaining to European customary law.

**German Captured Documents Collection** - 350,000-piece collection of documents mostly from the interwar and World War II periods.

**Gertrude Clarke Whittall Foundation Collection** - Manuscripts, letters, papers of major composers, and research materials relating to Paganini and Mendelssohn.

**Independent Press Collections** - The Library has considerable holdings for Poland and the Soviet Union (and separately for Ukraine) during the late 1980s/early 1990s. The Soviet Independent Press collection comprises 3,000 serial titles with ca. 20,000 issues.

Holdings lists are available at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/european/pubs.h~rni>.

**John Boyd Thacher Collection** - European autograph and French Revolution research library.

**Otto Vollbehr Collections** - 15th~century incunabula, including one of three surviving copies on velum of the Gutenberg Bible produced in Mainz.

**Raymond Toinet Collection** - French literary works from the 17th, 18th, and 19th-centuries.

**Sigmund Freud Collection** - Papers (1856-1939) and early editions of Freud's writings.

**Telephone Directories** - Retrospective telephone/address directories, both organizational and residential, from each country. Because they are usually not listed in the online catalog, the European Division has prepared holdings lists for many countries, on the European Divisions web site.

**Tissandier Collection** - Multiformat French collection on the history of aeronautics, 1539- 1929.

**Yudin Collection**, pre-1906 - including 68,000 volumes in Russian, forming the basis of the Library's Russian collections.

## V. ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

The Library's subscriptions to commercial resources include bibliographic databases that provide ways to search tens of thousands of periodicals for articles from or about Europe. Among these are many subject-oriented databases (e.g., *ATLA Religion Database*, *Historical Abstracts*, etc.) that index articles about one discipline worldwide. Other bibliographic databases cover periodical literature of earlier centuries, e.g., *Periodicals Index Online*, which cites articles as far back as the 1770s from scholarly periodicals in English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish. In addition, some databases originating in Europe (e.g., *FRANCIS*, *IBZ Online*, and the *Russian Academy of Sciences Bibliographies*) provide extensive coverage of the humanities and social sciences literature produced in Europe and elsewhere. These are just a few examples of bibliographic databases that allow researchers to mine the Library's Europe-related periodical literature, both retrospective and current, both print and digital.

The Library subscribes to more than 15,000 online newspapers and periodicals, some of which are from Europe. Notable is the large set of online Russian serials.

The Library has digitized some European materials. Many of the Library's international digital collections are presented under *Global Gateway: World Culture and Resources* and include joint projects with the national libraries of France, the

Netherlands, Russia, and Spain, to bring together bilingual, multimedia digital libraries that reflect early European influences on and relations with America. Also found in *Global Gateway* are individual collections that reflect European culture, e.g., the *Prokudin-Gorskii* color photographs of the Russian empire 1909-1915, and the first 13 manuscript volumes of the *Polish Declarations of Admiration and Friendship for the United States*, presented to President Calvin Coolidge in 1926, with greetings from dignitaries and more than 5 ½ million school children in Poland.

The Library has digitized more than a dozen of the European Division's publications and a few retrospective telephone directories from Eastern Europe. The European Reading Room also provides access, on a stand-alone computer, to the *Comintern Archive*—more than one million pages from communist and left-socialist parties in 21 countries, mostly from 1918 to the 1940s.

## **VI. WEAKNESSES/EXCLUSIONS**

Some items are routinely excluded from LC's collections: textbooks, most pamphlets, children's literature, offprints, reprints, and translations from one foreign language into another. Although textbooks are generally not collected, the Library should focus more attention on acquiring history textbooks, for researchers are interested in studying how foreign countries teach their history.

Holdings of pre-1945 European newspapers are uneven. For instance, while the early French newspaper collection is quite strong, early newspapers from other geographic areas, especially southeastern Europe, are quite weak. Similarly, the pre-1945 American ethnic European press collections are uneven.